United Nations DP/2006/24

Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme and of the
United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
19 April 2006

Original: English

Annual session 2006
12 to 23 June 2006, Geneva
Item 13 of the provisional agenda
United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers
Report of the Administrator

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the performance of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme during the biennium 2004-2005 through the results framework of the organization, which is aligned to the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) of UNDP. At its core are the areas of distinctive contribution that UNV makes to United Nations system-wide efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The framework responds to the request of the Executive Board, in its decision 2004/16, for enhanced analysis leading to deeper understanding of the activities and impact of UNV.

The annexes to this report, which may be accessed at the Executive Board website, present in tabular form the UNV business model; the contribution of UNV to development effectiveness; the statistical overview; and the resources planning table.

Elements of a decision

In taking note of the present report, the Executive Board may also wish to:

1. Express appreciation for the activities of UNV programme in promoting volunteerism for development, including mobilizing volunteers;

2. Welcome UNV efforts in developing and applying a business model and a results framework that highlight UNV areas of distinct contribution to development and peace, and allow for enhanced analysis and understanding of UNV activities and impact;

3. Welcome in this regard the alignment of the UNV results framework, for reasons of clarity, simplification and harmonization, with the UNDP MYFF, while ensuring adaptability to the results frameworks of the United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes with which UNV partners;

4. Recognize the particular contributions of UNV towards activating key 'drivers of development effectiveness', such as building national capacities; promoting national ownership; advocating and fostering an enabling environment; seeking South-South solutions; promoting gender equity; and forging strategic partnerships;

06-32424 (E) 110506

5. Also welcome the initiatives taken to develop new partnerships and build up the substantive content of UNV work in promoting volunteerism in support of programme countries and reaffirm the importance of the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) in enabling UNV to continue moving forward in these areas;

6. Acknowledge with satisfaction the commitment of UNV to put in place an action plan aimed at increasing the percentage of women among serving UNV volunteers;

7. Reconfirm its support for UNV as a focal point for the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) and support UNV it in further developing its role in this respect, in line with General Assembly resolution 60/134.

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Volunteerism and development: the role of UNV	3
III.	The results framework	4
IV.	Overview, 2004-2005	5
	A. Main characteristics	6
	B. Programme activities	7
	C. Lessons learned from evaluations and reviews	15
V.	Resources management	16
	A. Financial resources	16
	B. Volunteer resources	17
VI.	Challenges and opportunities	18

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of the performance of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme during 2004-2005. It highlights the range and depth of UNV-supported activities that are helping to reinforce linkages between volunteerism and development while, at the same time, demonstrating continued marked growth in the number of volunteers mobilized and deployed by the programme.

2. In its decision 2004/16, the Executive Board encouraged UNV to pursue further analysis to facilitate in-depth understanding of UNV activities and their impact. In response, the main body of the current report is structured around (a) the role of UNV with regard to linking volunteerism with peace and development, and the related business model; (b) a results framework that focuses on the distinctive contributions that UNV brings to the broader peace and development agenda; and (c) an overview of main characteristics and specific programme activities that provide typical examples illustrating the nature and relevance of the business model and the areas of distinctive contribution.

3. Consultations with principal stakeholders have confirmed that the above approach is appropriate and enhances the analysis of UNV activities, providing further in-depth understanding of their impact.

II. Volunteerism and development: the role of UNV

4. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute the foundation underpinning the mission of UNV of supporting sustainable human development through volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. At the heart of the UNV approach is the conviction that voluntary action by millions of people in programme countries and elsewhere, is a vastly under recognized and under-utilised resource that needs to be strategically engaged if the challenge of attaining the MDGs is to be successful. In 2001, IYV brought into sharper focus the potential of volunteerism to deliver far-reaching, wide-ranging economic and social returns. Properly understood and supported, volunteerism can foster empowerment, broad-based ownership, and participation for those affected by poverty and exclusion. It has the potential to move disadvantaged populations away from being passive recipients and towards becoming engaged actors in their own development.

5. A milestone for UNV in the biennium was assuming its responsibility for acting on the request of the General Assembly for the Secretary-General to report to its sixtieth session on the implementation of resolution 57/106 on follow-up to IYV. In preparing the report UNV undertook a global survey covering a range of stakeholders including governments, the United Nations system, civil society, parliamentarians, the media, academia and the private sector. An Internet survey was also conducted to solicit information from the general public. The resulting report (A/60/128) noted that most of the recommendations proposed in resolution 57/106 were being taken up by governments and the United Nations system, but that there were wide variations in trends between countries and regions, and this unevenness needed to be addressed if volunteerism was to realize its full potential for contributing to present challenges.

6. The General Assembly, in resolution 60/134 adopted on 16 December 2005 with the co-sponsorship of 84 Member States, reaffirmed its recognition of volunteerism as an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, and singled out

the contribution made by UNV for acknowledgement. The resolution requested UNV to continue its efforts to raise awareness of volunteerism; increase reference and networking resources available; provide technical cooperation to developing countries in the field of volunteerism; and enhance cooperation among those operating on the ground.

7. On the basis of this, and previous inter-governmental legislation, UNV is increasingly engaged in ensuring that volunteerism in its various forms – mutual aid and self-help, philanthropy and service, advocacy and campaigning – is an activator of the 'drivers of development effectiveness' identified by UNDP, namely, building national capacities; promoting national ownership; advocating and fostering an enabling environment; seeking South-South solutions; promoting gender equity; and forging strategic partnerships. By tapping into, and building up, the stock of knowledge, social entrepreneurship and solidarity in a country, volunteerism helps to develop sustainable capacities and strengthens values based on collaboration and partnership. Such capacities and values will be important determinants of the extent to which the MDGs are achieved.

8. Against this background, the UNV business model has been developed around the following three areas of intervention: (a) Advocating for volunteerism and development globally; (b) Integrating volunteerism in development planning; and (c) Mobilizing volunteers for peace and development. These areas are developed further in Chapter IV, under 'Main characteristics', with examples that illustrate their nature and relevance (see also annex 1, table A).

III The results framework

9. Responding to Executive Board encouragement, and using results-oriented approaches, UNV undertook to appraise and express the distinctive nature of its activities. The guiding principle, for reasons of clarity, simplification, and harmonization, has been the continued alignment of the UNV-specific results framework with the UNDP MYFF, with its structure of five goals, 30 service lines and six crosscutting 'drivers', and the definition of the UNV specificity as an additional dimension thereto. The result is a framework that builds on UNV linkages with UNDP, including as they relate UNDP support of the United Nations system as a whole. UNDP administers UNV and provides the global platform and network through which the programme operates, as well as connections with central policymakers in programme countries, which helps ensure the scaling-up and sustainability of UNV contributions.

A. Areas of distinctive contribution

10. The distinctive contributions of the UNV programme, UNV volunteers, and other volunteers associated with UNV, generate a range of outputs that contribute to achieving the MDGs (see also annex 1, table B). Examples drawn from across the developing world are provided in Chapter IV of this report. They build on the strength of combining the 'UN' and the 'V' that make up UNV as distinct but mutually reinforcing and value-adding attributes. On the 'UN' side UNV brings authority, legitimacy, neutrality and universality, as well as the potential for scaling up successful initiatives. It also allows for advocating at the national level for policy and programming to open up more space in which the fullest expression can be given to the contribution of volunteerism to the development of a country. The 'V' for volunteers – and volunteerism – brings a solidarity-driven approach to many issues

and includes the engagement, commitment, dedication, pragmatism and people-centred approaches that help ensure the activation of the drivers mentioned earlier.

11. Against this background, and taking into account the need for adaptability to the results frameworks of other United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes with which UNV partners, the UNV-specific areas of distinctive contribution are:

Access to services and service delivery

12. This contribution concerns enabling disadvantaged groups and communities to gain wider access to services and enhancing the delivery of such services. From the local community perspective, this includes strengthening the functioning of volunteer-involving organizations, including the way they represent the interests of local stakeholders; improving dissemination to communities of information on available services and conditions of access to them; and encouraging knowledge-sharing within and among communities. For service providers it includes upgrading the understanding of needs of local people and effective delivery processes, as well as facilitating inter-institutional coordination. Typically, UNV has worked with target groups to better articulate their demand for services, and with service providers to ensure that they better understand local needs and are able to integrate them into the programming of service delivery.

Inclusion and participation

13. This contribution concerns promoting the inclusion of all stakeholders, in particular the disadvantaged, in processes that affect their well-being. It includes making information available on opportunities and requirements for participation; putting in place sustainable strategies and processes for participation; establishing and strengthening horizontal networks to facilitate access by targeted groups to decision-making processes; and ensuring that mechanisms are in place to facilitate dialogue between actors at various levels of decision-making. The extensive role played by UNV in election processes is a good illustration of the value it adds in this area. Other examples include UNV efforts to ensure that women, youth, people with disabilities and those affected by HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable groups, are included in voluntary task groups that address selective development issues.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

14. This contribution concerns fostering community mobilization through voluntary action to address local development issues. It includes promoting greater awareness among communities of common issues and alternative ways to address them; enhancing local capacity to develop project proposals and manage implementation; improving networking and communication among local people; establishing systems for interaction and knowledge-sharing; familiarizing local people with improved group-action techniques; strengthening community leadership; and creating or upgrading instruments available at local levels to document processes and accomplishments. An example of this type of contribution is the support UNV provides for the implementation of self-help initiatives in a wide range of areas on the part of local volunteer-based groups equipped with relevant skills and materials, resulting in increased local self-reliance.

IV. Overview, 2004-2005

15. The main characteristics of the three mutually reinforcing and interconnected areas of intervention that make up the UNV business model are described below under: 'A. Main characteristics. Typical examples of areas of distinctive contribution

and their relationship with respective MYFF goals are detailed under "B. Programme activities. In this connection, it is important to note that the present report is complemented by the multi-year funding framework report on UNDP performance and results (DP/2006/35), which also covers UNV contributions.

A. Main characteristics

Advocating for volunteerism and development globally

16. Building on its role as focal point for IYV and its follow-up, UNV has become an advocate for the contribution of volunteerism as a sustainable, cost-efficient and culturally adapted development asset. The underlying premise is that volunteerism is abundant and readily available everywhere but needs recognition and support for its potential to be fully realized. Advocacy activities include: stimulating national policy and legislation supportive of volunteerism; involvement in global events related to volunteerism and development as organizer, co-organizer, participant or observer; supporting research to assess the impact of volunteering and publishing reports on different aspects of volunteer activity; alliance building with partners within and outside the United Nations system; communication efforts, in particular managing the World Volunteer Web portal, as well as through publications, campaigns and media outreach; and acting as United Nations system focal point for International Volunteer Day and the follow-up to IYV. Successful examples of advocacy were the extensive references to volunteerism in the outcome document of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan in 2005, and the organization with the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations system of the first International Conference on Volunteerism and the Millennium Development Goals, held in Islamabad in December 2004.

Integrating volunteerism into development programming

17. In the years following 2001, UNV has been stepping up efforts to include volunteerism in activities that contribute to achieving the MDGs. The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) supports innovative pilot activities that demonstrate the added value of volunteerism, including by partners implementing volunteer-driven initiatives aimed at achieving the MDGs. UNV has been encouraging partners to factor volunteerism into development programming, included in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The role of volunteerism in development was discussed in the national human development reports of countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Honduras, Indonesia, the Philippines, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa and Yemen, and in similar reports in India at the state level.

Mobilizing volunteers for development and peace

18. An important trademark of UNV continues to be the thousands of professionally qualified, experienced and committed women and men of some 170 nationalities who, each year, serve as UNV volunteers in United Nations system-supported programmes and projects in over 140 countries. Over the biennium, assignments grew by 45 per cent to reach 8,470 in 2005, while the number of individual volunteers increased by 44 per cent to 8,122, both unprecedented achievements in the history of UNV. Annex 2 provides an overview by region.

19. UNV contributions continue to gain strength from the complementarity of international and national volunteers. UNV volunteers serving in their own countries make contributions to national capacity-building, and in 2005 their numbers increased to some 3250, maintaining the overall ratio at around 40 per cent of all UNV volunteers. Seventy-two per cent of international UNV volunteers came from

developing countries and served in other developing countries, making UNV a continuous, strong expression of South-South cooperation.

20. UNV is committed to ensuring the full participation of women. Women volunteers account for 37 per cent of all assignments. The gender target for the 2006-2007 biennium is between 40 and 45 per cent women UNV volunteers, reaching 45 to 50 per cent during 2008-2009.

21. As this report illustrates, UNV is increasingly being called upon to assist programme countries in developing national capacities to mobilize volunteers domestically, including by establishing national volunteer centres and networks, youth volunteer schemes, university volunteer initiatives, and intra and inter country volunteer exchange programmes. In addition, a growing number of UNV volunteers are themselves mobilizing volunteers locally as an integral part of their terms of reference and/or modus operandi. UNV has been consolidating new forms of volunteer affiliation with the programme, in particular UNV interns and associates who include thousands of online volunteers. Paragraphs 72 and 73 refer to these newer modalities.

B. Programme activities

22. This section features examples representative of the distinct contributions that UNV makes to development. The activities described illustrate the three areas of distinctive contribution that characterize UNV interventions, and the value they add to the five development goals articulated in the MYFF, in particular, and to development effectiveness in general.

Goal 1. Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty

23. The UNV contribution to poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs is largely predicated on the premise that national development targets have to be realized in local communities. Approximately 30 per cent of UNV volunteer assignments involve strengthening the capacities of a wide range of local stakeholders, both public and private, to take advantage of opportunities to engage in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Areas include urban development, micro-enterprise, youth programmes, information and communication technologies, enhancing capacities of the public sector for service delivery, corporate social engagement, and civil society empowerment.

Access to services and service delivery

24. A first example of access to and delivery of services comes from Ethiopia. As part of a decentralized federation, the regions of the country face key challenges in generating and managing their development resources. In partnership with UNDP and the Government, over 100 Ethiopian UNV volunteers strengthen the capacities of regional administrations to deliver services and develop infrastructures. The volunteers contributed to enhanced aid coordination and financial management, the involvement of communities in development planning and implementation, and improved monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving the MDGs. They design systems to improve access to and share information, including creating an e-government platform containing social and economic data, and an Internet-based network linking 200 high schools for interactive communication and learning. Another example is Burkina Faso, where UNV volunteers from the Hauts-Bassin region strengthen local structures to support underprivileged youth and enhance their social and economic reintegration. They foster systematic coordination and dialogue among civil society and public structures, and strengthen the capacities of community organizations to provide education, professional training and counselling services to

young people, 70 per cent of whom are women. Some of the youth have begun income-generating activities with the sponsorship of small grants.

25. The involvement of young people in local poverty-reduction initiatives in their own countries is a growth area for UNV. A successful example is Bolivia, where, as part of the national strategy to fight poverty, UNV helped develop a programme to mobilize 1,100 university students, half of them women, to assist 175 municipalities in reducing poverty. For example, student volunteers helped a municipality develop its first comprehensive database of rural cooperatives, which now contributes to more targeted policy planning and services. UNV is helping to develop similar volunteering schemes in Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Guatemala.

26. UNV continues to assist developing countries make use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for development. An example is the continued expansion of the network of universities under the United Nations Information and Technology Services initiative through which students and academic staff can access volunteer opportunities to share ICT skills with other countries. Forty-three universities are involved – almost half in programme countries. In Jordan, for instance, universities in the network collaborate with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in an 'e-village initiative' that increases social and economic opportunities for rural women by using ICT to obtain information and market their products and services online. UNV also partners with the private sector in the ICT field. One illustrative example is a French telecommunications company whose volunteers, under the UNV corporate/private sector initiative, have expanded the ICT capabilities of civil society in Benin, setting up low-cost Internet connections and an intranet system to accelerate communication and information sharing.

Inclusion and participation

27. As the number of city dwellers continues to grow worldwide, so do the challenges of engaging the urban poor in development. One example of the contribution of UNV is the 'Intra-City Volunteerism' scheme in Ecuador, Jamaica and Yemen, through which community resources are mobilized to improve living conditions in urban settings. Community organizations are linked with local government in joint appraisal and planning, and volunteering around urban improvement projects is fostered. A key outcome in Ecuador has been the establishment of municipal volunteer offices as sustainable platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue which harness citizens' contributions against urban poverty. The success of this modality in one Ecuadorian municipality has prompted replication elsewhere in Ecuador, and in neighbouring Peru.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

28. Partnering with UNICEF in the fight against infant mortality in Mali, UNV helps involve thousands of families in six health districts across the country. In this example, UNV volunteers organized a network of over 5,000 community workers to train households in practices conducive to child health, such as disease prevention, nutrition and proper hygiene. Districts covered have seen a 21 per cent decrease in child mortality over three years – 12 per cent above districts without such large-scale volunteer-based community mobilization. Other health indicators included a reduced incidence of malaria and increases in child immunization. The mobilization of volunteer community workers is now an integrated programming component in expanded child health programmes in six more districts.

29. In Ukraine, UNV supports local development in the areas worst affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the subsequent economic collapse. With SVF funding,

and cooperating closely with local authorities, UNV volunteers strengthen community capacity to design and implement projects that raise living conditions. Some 200 citizen task-forces have been formed and have launched over 125 community-improvement actions, including setting up a marketplace, rebuilding schools, health posts and kindergartens, and improving water supply, heating and sewerage systems.

30. UNV strengthened capacities of volunteer-involving organizations to contribute to achieving the MDGs, providing advice and technical support. In Guatemala, for instance, a national volunteer network was established, while in Sudan, a volunteering forum was set up to coordinate and organize volunteer-related activities at the grass-roots and national levels. The forum was responsible for a successful national symposium on volunteering for the MDGs, held in 2005, as follow-up to an international conference held in Islamabad on the same subject (see paragraph 16).

Goal 2. Fostering democratic governance

31. UNV has a long-time record of support to democratic governance initiatives, often at the local level. During the biennium, 18 per cent of UNV volunteer assignments focused on governance-related activities such as decentralization and local governance, elections, justice and human rights, public administration reform and anti-corruption measures. This contributed to enhancing the capacity of public institutions to deliver essential services, and helping disadvantaged groups to better identify and articulate needs and implement and monitor development initiatives. Inclusion is promoted by developing mechanisms that foster the participation of stakeholders at the margins of governmental decision-making processes.

Access to services and service delivery

32. One example of UNV work in expanding access to services and service delivery is Niger, where over 1,000 local officials elected in 2004 were trained by UNV volunteers in budget and financing to improve tax revenue collection. As a result the Mayahi District, for instance, saw a 30 per cent increase in tax revenue to help finance enhanced local services.

33. Human rights monitoring and protection is of paramount importance in conflict situations. In Darfur, Sudan, for example, UNV volunteers with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan were among the first to investigate allegations of human rights abuse. Living in some of the most isolated areas and working closely with local organizations and community leaders, the volunteers interviewed victims and reported and followed up on cases of human rights abuses with the police, national security services and prison staff. UNV volunteers also developed and implemented human rights training programmes and collected indicators of human rights – including gender-specific indicators.

Inclusion and participation

34. The capacity of governments to manage elections is an essential component of governance. During the biennium, UNV was involved, on a large scale, in strengthening national capacities in most major United Nations-supported electoral processes. The number of UNV volunteers engaged in electoral activities increased by 64 per cent over the previous biennium. Over 1,200 were deployed to support 10 United Nations electoral missions, often making up the largest part of electoral staff at the community level. Their roles included civic and voter education; organizing registration processes; polling preparation; and logistical support.

35. Over 600 UNV volunteers collaborated with UNDP and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to facilitate the voter registration process for the first free elections in 2004. Deployed throughout the provinces, UNV volunteers

facilitated the registration of over 10 million people, providing civic education in remote villages and training tens of thousands of election officials. Half the UNV volunteers were nationals of Afghanistan, who were trained to manage the central registration centre. These nationals subsequently took on electoral registration responsibilities in 2005, within the national electoral commission. Over 180 UNV electoral officers attached to the United Nations Mission in Liberia supported the successful implementation of the October 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections. They played a vital role in registering voters in the main towns, remote villages and camps for the internally displaced, conducted civic education campaigns and trained some 18,500 election officials in all aspects of electoral preparation.

36. Limited opportunities for communities, and the poor in particular, to participate in formal decision-making is a major challenge faced by countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the context of decentralization efforts. Drawing on a long tradition of self-help ('asasamak'), in this example UNV is involving local communities in formulating, planning, managing and monitoring poverty alleviation initiatives. Public officials and citizens are trained and supported in joint collection and analysis of poverty data, preparing participatory village plans, and establishing a citizens' information centre. The volunteers support inclusive dialogue mechanisms such as town-hall meetings where citizens can participate in discussions on public budgets, public services and indicators for monitoring service delivery. The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board delegation participating in a 2005 field visit commended UNV work with local communities as deserving of replication in other countries and dissemination through knowledge networks.

37. Governance processes and systems of consultation must involve women, ethnic minorities and other stakeholders often excluded from participating in decision-making. One example of UNV efforts in this area was the agreement signed with UNIFEM in 2005 to launch a new programming partnership to mainstream gender perspectives into local government expenditure plans and to recognize women's voluntary contributions to development in Latin America. Ensuring the participation of women was also a task of some 150 UNV volunteers in the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the lead-up to the 2005 national constitutional referendum. The UNV volunteers, nearly half of whom were women, worked in remote areas to equip hundreds of local groups with information and tools to motivate women to vote. These efforts contributed to a large turnout by women at the polls – 60 percent of all voters. In Ecuador, UNV partnered with the human rights strengthening programme of UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide human rights training to 500 representatives of indigenous people, including women, and to launch dialogue mechanisms between them and local institutions.

38. Involving Guatemalan citizens in peaceful, sustainable self-government at all levels was a long-term goal of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), in which for over a decade some 430 UNV volunteers facilitated verification of human rights at the community level. Pivotal to the transition to local ownership was the engagement in 2004, the final year of the Mission, of 60 national UNV volunteers drawn from all regions of the country. More than half were indigenous people. These national transition volunteers took technical skills and leadership on human rights, peacebuilding and local governance processes back to their organizations and communities. The United Nations Secretary-General, in his report on MINUGUA to the General Assembly (A/59/746), identified this initiative as one of the most successful, which could be replicated in other missions.

39. Young people's disaffection from political processes is a central governance challenge. An example of UNV work in this area is in Kyrgyzstan, where efforts are

being made at the grass roots to tackle voter apathy among the youth, who make up 40 per cent of the population. Supporting a programme launched by UNDP in 2005, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and national partners, UNV volunteers from Kyrgyzstan worked with grass-roots organizations in 200 rural communities to engage youth in local elections. They helped form 150 youth groups, and over 7,000 youth-group members designed village development plans and met with over 400 candidates and newly elected officials to discuss local priorities. A subsequent survey among young people indicated that twice as many felt able to influence decision making, and over 15 per cent more planned to vote, than during the presidential elections held earlier in the year.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

40. UNV helps extend human rights and justice institutions to the subnational level. UNV volunteers in Uganda, for example, helped to strengthen the outreach of the National Human Rights Commission in post-conflict areas. Tapping into existing local volunteer practices, they assisted citizens in forming voluntary action groups, training them to promote and monitor human rights in their villages, and to report human rights violations on behalf of community members. Mobilizing community capacity has led to a marked increase in reporting human rights violations. The volunteer groups are repositories of knowledge and have viable community structures with an excellent likelihood of enduring once outside involvement ceases.

41. In Egypt, a human rights-based community outreach strategy for eliminating the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is being supported by UNV in collaboration with UNDP. National UNV volunteers are involved as young leaders at village level to raise awareness about the health-related consequences of female genital mutilation, and to advocate against the social pressure on young girls and women. Reaching out to peers, they have mobilized over a thousand young people to further disseminate the message. Several villages made public declarations renouncing female genital mutilation, and national partners have announced plans to replicate the approach of mobilizing young community leaders in other areas of children's and women's rights protection.

Goal 3. Energy and environment for sustainable development

42. The contributions of UNV to this goal embrace environmental sustainability as a primary objective and as an opportunity to pursue other aims such as job creation, enhancing local governance and fostering cross-cultural dialogue. In addition to UNV volunteer assignments, volunteer contributions to environmental management were mobilized from the private sector and from scores of volunteers in local communities in areas such as land degradation, waste management and sustainable water use.

Access to services and service delivery

43. One example of improved access to services and services delivery can be found in Sri Lanka, where UNV partners with UNDP to implement a small grants programme financed through the Global Environmental Facility, to support local community organizations in regions affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami in rebuilding the coastal environment. UNV volunteers strengthen their capacity to plan, implement and engage with community members.

Inclusion and participation

44. The livelihoods of communities along the Mekong River depend greatly upon sustainable use of its natural resources. UNV assists rural communities to understand and address conflicting and detrimental uses of the river in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Thailand. Within the framework of the UNDP-

sponsored community dialogue initiative, and in collaboration with national counterparts, UNV volunteers from the three countries promote the establishment of self-help groups to take action in areas such as riverbank protection, fish stocks conservation, water quality monitoring, and the development of sustainable tourism. They also create opportunities for dialogue on environmental governance between community members and local government, as well as with communities on the other side of the river. A multi-stakeholder workshop in 2005, including government and civil society representatives, concluded that UNV plays a critical role in engaging local actors in environmental management dialogues and processes.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

45. Desertification is a major cause and consequence of rural poverty. Partnering with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and UNDP, UNV has provided a new approach in addressing youth unemployment in Cape Verde. Working with national youth centres all over the country, UNV helped to establish a youth volunteer corps for the environment to engage jobless young people in combating land degradation. The volunteers, mostly women, are acquiring skills to implement environmentally sensitive income-generating projects. Reinvigorating the Cape Verde tradition of mutual assistance – 'djunta mó in Creole – the volunteer corps has stimulated renewed national dialogue on volunteerism and on developing a volunteer law and a national volunteer programme.

46. UNV mobilizes volunteers under its corporate private sector initiative to support long-term environmental sustainability. In Guinea Bissau, for example, UNV partners with a France-based international public utilities management corporation to improve local waste management. In cooperation with local authorities, the corporate volunteers provide local organizations with technical expertise while UNV volunteers help set up a community-based system to monitor and improve garbage collection and disposal.

Goal 4. Crisis prevention and recovery

47. The experience of UNV in recovery efforts in the wake of natural and man-made crises is an important asset to its partners. Some 43 per cent of UNV volunteer assignments contributed to the achievements of United Nations humanitarian and peacekeeping agencies and national partners in about a hundred countries. They support the delivery of essential services and strengthen physical and institutional infrastructures and capacities to deal with crises. UNV is engaged in building social infrastructure by fostering volunteer-based mobilization as a channel for citizens to participate actively in prevention, preparedness and recovery.

Access to services and service delivery

48. The capacity of UNV to deploy, in humanitarian crisis situations, well-qualified, experienced professionals in a rapid, flexible manner was thoroughly tested during the biennium. Within 48 hours of the Indian Ocean tsunami, UNV volunteer specialists in disaster response from India arrived in the affected countries to assist with relief efforts. They immediately strengthened the capacity of national counterparts and United Nations organizations, including United Nations offices, in India, Indonesia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka to assess damage and needs, and to channel assistance more effectively to the injured and displaced. The volunteers were instrumental in coordinating communications among relief actors and provided expertise in reconstructing the infrastructure. Support has since been provided to a range of partners, including civil society organizations, to deliver on reconstruction objectives. UNV mobilized volunteers under its corporate/private sector initiative to assist, for example, in repairing the electrical installation of the main hospital in

Banda Aceh and electrifying new houses in Sri Lanka. Through a partnership with a Dubai-based airline, frequent-flyer miles were donated by travellers for the deployment of UNV volunteers in the region.

49. In the context of both emergency and long-term operations, UNV volunteers provide substantive and operational support to ensure access to the most basic services, ranging from the initial set-up and daily logistical management of refugee camps to community services, legal affairs and information dissemination. The number of UNV volunteers serving with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees grew by 25 per cent during the biennium, 754 volunteers having been assigned in 2005.

50. UNV involvement with other United Nations humanitarian agencies, including Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, also grew. The number of UNV volunteers supporting the World Food Programme increased by 25 per cent over the biennium, with 249 volunteers serving in 2005.

51. The surge in United Nations peacekeeping operations was reflected in a 55 per cent increase over the previous biennium in assignments supporting the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Over 2,500 UNV volunteer assignments were conducted in 13 countries in 2005, in some 100 substantive and operational support categories, including the UNV volunteers involved in electoral support (see paragraphs 35 and 37).

Inclusion and participation

52. The networks of reciprocity and relations binding members of a society – or social capital – have been observed to help address conflict. Operating on this premise, UNV embraces local volunteerism as a vehicle to foster reconciliation and bring divided societies together around joint projects, thereby strengthening the social fabric of communities, their resilience and their ability to cope. In Sierra Leone, for example, this approach has been instrumental in supporting the United Nations Mission in bringing about the sustainable reintegration of thousands of ex-combatants into their communities. Spearheading the implementation of the UNDP 'StopGap' programme (winner of the 'United Nations 21' award in 2004), UNV volunteers supported community-based organizations in managing labour-intensive, quick-impact community infrastructure and agricultural development projects employing thousands of ex -combatants and community members. With SVF funding, national UNV volunteers helped to re-broker community relations, including by coaching youth leaders to become part of local councils and by organizing recreational, cultural, and sports activities.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

53. Adequate risk reduction approaches can reduce considerably the scale of damage and protect prior development gains in the event of natural disasters. UNV supports community-centred disaster preparedness, as well as governance and institutional policy frameworks for incorporating volunteering into risk-reduction management systems. A prime example is UNDP/UNV partnership supporting the disaster risk management programme of the Government of India established in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake and the Orissa cyclone. Over 400 UNV volunteers assisted communities and local self-governments in disaster-threatened remote areas of the country in preparing for possible calamity. Pooling community knowledge and resources, volunteers facilitate the development of village-specific maps, evacuation plans and contingency strategies, and help identify and train volunteer task forces and run mock drills. Enlisting folk troupes and hundreds of local volunteers, UNV

volunteers work to deliver crucial messages on long-term risk management to tens of thousands of predominantly illiterate people across the country. UNV volunteers from Brazil use similar people-centred approaches to help set up disaster surveillance and monitoring systems in poor communities, raising awareness about mudslide and flash flood risks, and enlisting local residents as volunteers to help Civil Defence and municipalities map risk exposures and build a preventive infrastructure.

54. In Pakistan, UNV was called upon by the Government and UNDP to assist in establishing a national volunteer movement, in the wake of the 2005 earthquake, to mobilize citizen involvement in relief and rehabilitation activities. UNV will help develop the institutional and management framework for the movement to focus on subsequent long-term disaster preparedness.

55. Recognizing that regional integration can be a catalyst for development and confidence building in post-conflict environments, in 2005 UNDP and UNV launched a scheme for cross-border volunteer exchanges to foster poverty reduction and social cohesion in South-Eastern Europe. Volunteers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia and Montenegro serve within civil society organizations working to achieve the MDGs. In Africa, UNV partners with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to promote the contribution of volunteerism to stability in the region. With UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNV will build the capacity of ECOWAS to establish a regional volunteer corps to strengthen capacities of civil society organizations working in peacebuilding, reconstruction and reconciliation. The initiative is being launched in five pilot countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo.

56. Across peacekeeping missions UNV volunteers often volunteer locally and mobilize additional local volunteers to join 'action teams'. Such teams have built a playground in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone; rehabilitated a local pre-school in Eritrea; and supported a confidence-building initiative in Kosovo that involved members of different ethnic groups volunteering in each others' districts for the first time since the conflict.

Goal 5. Responding to HIV/AIDS

57. The contributions of UNV to addressing the immediate and long-term human capacity challenges brought about by HIV/AIDS are an important strength of the organization. UNV volunteers provide immediate relief to over-stretched capacities of public institutions at national and local levels as well as longer-term capacity building assistance. They also work within communities mobilizing local human resources, including people living with HIV/AIDS, as prime actors in prevention, treatment and care.

Access to services and service delivery

58. UNV continues to support the UNDP Southern Africa Capacity Initiative aimed at offsetting the dramatic loss of skilled human resources resulting from the pandemic and building longer-term solutions to address capacity issues. Some 155 UNV volunteers (70 per cent from the South, most of them from Africa) serve in the nine participating countries to help restore the ability of governments to deliver essential services, and to enhance the capacity of communities to cope. A national UNV volunteer scheme launched in Zambia helps public administration to improve policy design, programming quality, and absorption capacity to utilize donor resources effectively. The volunteers help district HIV/AIDS task forces streamline working procedures and planning mechanisms, and support the creation of village task forces as platforms for community members and traditional leaders to better articulate

demand for services. They extend technical support to community groups and connect them to sources of funding. Local organizations in one district can now help 1,400 of the poorest women in 30 villages generate income through microfinance schemes, which are doubling as a forum for the women to organize, on a volunteer basis, to take direct action against HIV/AIDS.

59. Reinforcing capacity sustainability at the community level is the distinct contribution of UNV to the fight against HIV/AIDS in countries such as Guyana. In the short term, UNV volunteer doctors from 10 countries in the South are meeting immediate health-care delivery needs, in addition to training local health workers, family members and people living with HIV/AIDS in the skills they need to provide long-term prevention, care and treatment services to the population. With the involvement of local volunteers, they hold medical outreach clinics in isolated communities.

Inclusion and participation

60. UNV supports the greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA), an initiative of UNDP and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS). In Cambodia, for example, with SVF funding, UNV supports the inclusion of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (PLHA). Placed within government institutions leading the national response to the pandemic, Cambodian UNV volunteers, some of whom are HIV positive, are helping local organizations integrate PLHA into their programmes and are advocating for the inclusion of PLHA issues in national planning processes. Focusing on gender-specific needs, they work to reduce the incidence of discrimination against women in the workplace, and have helped national PLHA networks create women-specific task forces and increase female membership, which has reached 5,000 spread across twelve provinces. A comparative study of project evaluations in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean confirmed the effectiveness of national UNV volunteers in implementing the GIPA approach. The study highlighted the tripartite partnership between UNAIDS, UNDP and UNV as an effective GIPA implementing strategy.

Community mobilization through voluntary action

61. A multi-stakeholder assessment mission in 2005 found that national UNV volunteers throughout Botswana are instrumental in the implementing the community conversation process, a concept introduced by UNDP to encourage local dialogue on HIV/AIDS. Working closely with village chiefs in districts with the highest prevalence rates, the volunteers are using the Kgotla, a traditional community gathering place, as a forum to encourage open discussions, break the stigma, and generate joint community responses. They mobilize and train hundreds of local volunteer facilitators to expand the community conversations, and strengthen the capacities of volunteer home-based care committees to help the bedridden. As a result, voluntary counselling, testing and prevention have increased, as has the availability of reliable data on HIV/ AIDS to inform policy decisions at district and national levels.

C. Lessons learned from evaluations and reviews

62. Evaluations and reviews play an important role in learning, accountability and decision-making at UNV. Recognizing findings from earlier evaluations which highlighted the need to strengthen indicators and other results information, UNV continued to refine these programme elements with particular emphasis on identifying the added value of UNV contributions. During the biennium, UNV commissioned 19 project, thematic and country evaluations covering activities and achievements in over 25 countries and including the contributions of some 600 UNV volunteers.

63. Most evaluations were in the areas of poverty reduction and governance. Overall, projects achieved their immediate objectives, although in some cases there were concerns over the sustainability of results. Sustaining momentum beyond the life of projects is challenging because of limitations in the institutional, financial and human resource capacities of implementing and host institutions.

64. Evaluations in poverty reduction stressed the importance of having a critical mass of volunteers to deepen the institution-building process and augment development changes for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs. In governance, evaluations found that UNV had contributed significantly in such areas as facilitating dialogue between community leaders and building institutional capacity within community-based organizations for self-governance. It is clear that enhancing sustainability further will require expanding collaboration with strategic partners, including local people and different levels of government, and creating space for grass-roots level dialogue among community leaders and across political parties.

65. Consideration of volunteerism will be enhanced after the completion, in 2006, of a guidance note on incorporating volunteerism contributions into evaluations. The methodology was developed by UNV jointly with six partner organizations involved in international volunteer mobilization. Together with the areas of distinctive UNV contribution to development effectiveness, the guidance note will be instrumental in sharpening the volunteerism focus of future UNV evaluations.

66. The online periodic reporting system introduced in 2003 was further refined based on experience in 2004 and has become a critical monitoring tool, enabling UNV to gauge how UNV volunteers perceive their assignments. During the biennium, over 10,000 reports were received with over 90 per cent of UNV volunteers indicating that they were on target or ahead with respect to achieving the objectives of their assignments. UNV volunteers were generally satisfied that good use was made of their skills, with most reporting a positive correlation between involvement in local volunteerism and numbers of people benefiting from their assignments, particularly in capacity-building activities. They reported general acceptance of the role of volunteerism in development on the part of their principal national and United Nations partners. Most stated that once their UNV assignment ended, they would continue to volunteer.

67. The information collected through volunteer reports is being adjusted to support management and reporting requirements under the new UNV results framework.

V. Resources management

68. The following short overview of UNV resources is a standard element of the Administrator's biennial report on UNV and is complemented by regular UNDP financial, budget and management reports that the Administrator submits, in which UNV-specific information forms an integral part.

A. Financial resources

69. Annex 3 provides a financial overview of UNV. Information on regular resources relates to the SVF. The designation 'other resources' relates to (a) cash contributions to UNV under trust funds, co-financing, full funding arrangements and the biennial support budget (approximately 31 per cent), and (b) the financial value of UNV volunteer assignments charged directly to agencies and partners (approximately 69 per cent). Although the latter does not represent cash contributions flowing through UNV books, it is incorporated in the overview to present the total financial value of UNV activities.

70. As reflected in annex 3, the total estimated value of activities carried out in 2004-2005 was $311.2 million, about 42 per cent more than in 2002-2003 and about 34 per cent more than was estimated for 2004-2005 in the 2004 report. Of that total, $14 million, or approximately 5 per cent, was financed from the SVF, and $297.3 million, or approximately 95 per cent, from other sources. The balance of SVF resources as at 31 December 2005 was $22.1 million, out of which $11.5 million was fully committed. Of the total of other resources, approximately 28 per cent was financed from UNDP resources, 41 per cent from DPKO, 17 per cent from other United Nations organizations, and 14 per cent under co-financing arrangements. With regard to the component relating to biennial support budget, the Executive Board, in its decision 2005/33, approved the proposals of the Administrator contained in document DP/2005/31.

71. The Administrator does not foresee such strong growth in UNV volunteer assignments during the 2006-2007 biennium as in the previous one. While increasing activities are foreseen with UNDP and United Nations partners other than DPKO, activities in the context of peacekeeping and electoral support are not expected to grow at the exceptional pace experienced during 2004-2005. This is reflected in 2006-2007 forecasts.

B. Volunteer resources

72. Steady growth of UNV volunteer assignments requires continuous improvements in recruitment processes. UNV invested in further reducing the time between receiving applications and the arrival of volunteers at their duty station, the alignment of supply of and demand for volunteer resources, and maintaining a dynamic resource bank of potential volunteers. The percentage of candidates using the UNV online application system increased from 25 to 48 per cent over the biennium. A system was introduced to permit candidates to update their own data. The UNV online application scheme proved invaluable in the UNV response to the large number of enquiries and applications received following the Indian Ocean tsunami. In barely three months, a special roster team processed over 7,200 applications, out of which some 1,300 profiles were included in an emergency roster for assignments in disaster-stricken areas.

73. UNV is engaging a wider group of citizens to volunteer for development, both locally and internationally. An intern scheme launched during the previous biennium, which enables younger people with limited experience to participate in development activities, was expanded. At the request of programme countries, UNV interns have been placed in such areas as governance, ICT, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection and disaster management. The programme in Bolivia described in paragraph 25 is an innovative example.

74. The UNV online volunteering service connects development organizations with volunteers over the Internet and supports effective online collaboration. The service facilitates capacity-building of host organizations by providing access to a broader pool of knowledge and resources and extends additional opportunities to individuals to volunteer for development. After a dedicated website was set up in 2004, use of the service doubled, with over 5,000 online assignments undertaken during the biennium providing technical expertise in areas such as technical expertise; project, resources and knowledge management; communications; and partnerships. Some 57 per cent of online volunteers are women, and 40 per cent are from developing countries. Through online contributions, host organizations were able to make better-informed decisions, improve their organizational management and positioning, enhance project delivery and develop networks and partnerships.

VI. Challenges and opportunities

75. The Administrator believes that the present report reinforces the importance of volunteerism in development and peacebuilding and reaffirms the significant role that UNV plays in enhancing recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering at all levels. The development of a results framework enhances analysis of UNV activities and provides an in-depth analysis of their impact. The framework provides opportunities for further harmonizing UNV activities with the strategic directions of United Nations system partners. In this connection, it is the view of the Administrator that one of the principal strengths of UNV is that it acts as a catalyst to the entire United Nations system, creating conditions that help produce outputs generating change in the living conditions of poor and marginalized populations, and with capacity development always at its core. The special and complementary relationship of UNV with its programming partners raises the challenge of attributing development results. The Administrator considers that this challenge is squarely addressed in the present report through the prism of a results framework that captures the areas of distinctive UNV contribution.

76. The successful application of the results framework as a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool requires UNV to further adjust its internal processes and systems to incorporate an increasingly results-oriented approach. In this regard, systems must take full advantage of the benefits of alignment with UNDP systems such as Atlas. Another aspect of the successful future application of the UNV results framework will be its ability to further build its own capacity, in-house as well as through strategic partnerships, to meet a growing demand for its programme interventions.

77. One more challenge for UNV is the area of gender. The present report reflects the progress being made in scaling-up the gender dimension of many UNV activities. With regard to the gender breakdown of UNV volunteers, an action plan will be put in place in the next biennium aimed at reaching a 45:50 ratio of female to male UNV volunteers by the end of the biennium, 2008-2009.

78. In conclusion, the Administrator wishes to underline that UNV continues to explore the range of options available to develop new strategic partnerships and build up the substantive content of its work in the field of promoting volunteerism, in close alignment with the United Nations system that it serves. In the Administrator's view, the level of contributions to the SVF is a measure of commitment in that regard. The SVF is critical to enabling UNV to pursue a catalytic role in developing relevant new approaches. By mobilizing an increasingly broad range of volunteers for development and peace, extending the integration of volunteerism into development programming, and scaling-up its global advocacy work, the contribution of UNV towards achieving the MDGs will be maximized.